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Anna McSweeney, "Mudéjar and the Alhambresque : Spanish Pavilions at the Universal Expositions and the Invention of a National Style."

Abstract:

Spain's complex relationship with its Islamic architectural heritage was brought into particular focus through the prism of its national pavilions that were built for the Universal Expositions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This paper explores how Spain chose to represent itself in several key expositions of the 1860s and 1870s, using a combination of styles derived from its Islamic architectural heritage, from the *mudéjar* to the Alhambresque. Particular attention is paid to the critical reception to the national pavilions within Spain; to the influence of global architectural trends on Spanish architects and critics; to the variety among the different versions of Spain's Islamic architecture that were promoted in the name of nationalism; and to the role of ephemeral architecture in the attempts to define a national architectural style.

Keywords: Mudéjar, Alhambra, Universal Expositions, World's Fairs, nineteenth-century Spain, al-Andalus, architectural nationalism, exposition pavilions, ephemeral architecture, Alhambresque, Alhambrism.

The art historian Whitney Davis has recently argued that artistic revivals are never a duplication, but rather a multiplication of a past for the purposes of the present, through which a new and different past is created.¹ This manipulation of the past was never clearer than at the Universal Expositions of the late nineteenth century, in which architects of Spain's national pavilions proposed contemporary ideas about the nation's character through the creation and manipulation of historic styles. The particular past that Spain chose to revive and the way it was presented and received at the expositions reveals much about how the nation saw itself in the present and created the story of its past. It was at this time, in the late nineteenth century, that Spain's Islamic architecture was repurposed in ways that responded to one of the key concerns of the time - specifically, the identification of a Spanish national architectural style.

The pavilions examined here demonstrate that two very different versions of Spain's Islamic architectural past were offered as expressions of this national style. The first of these, the Alhambresque, was born out of a European-wide romantic movement, which identified Spain with exoticism and the oriental. Part of the wider eclecticism movement in architecture, the Alhambresque took inspiration from the studies and re-workings of the Alhambra by Spanish and European architects including Rafael Contreras, Owen Jones and Carl von Diebitsch. The Alhambresque borrowed features from the Nasrid Alhambra palace, such as the *sebka* (lozenge) motif, the lobed arches, Nasrid-style capitals and intertwined vegetal motifs, and combined them with the highly coloured aesthetic of the nineteenth-century interpretations, which were influenced by contemporary debates on polychromy in architecture.² In royal and domestic European contexts, this style was reserved for interior use, in smoking rooms, bathrooms, and theatre interiors for example, rather than for facades. But in the context of public festivities and ceremonial structures, architects in Spain and abroad designed pavilions and kiosks that confidently displayed this Alhambresque style on their exuberant facades and structures. This style was adopted for a number of key Spanish pavilions that enjoyed considerable success at the late nineteenth-century expositions.

The second of the Islamic styles adopted by pavilion architects and patrons in Spain was the neo-*mudéjar*. The idea of a *mudéjar* style became popular in the mid-nineteenth century as a way of describing buildings that looked Islamic in style, but were produced under Christian rule in medieval Spain - in particular the buildings of Toledo and Seville from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. Unlike the globalised Alhambresque, the neo-*mudéjar* was considered particular to Spain and the Spanish (largely Castilian) experience, offering a potential solution to the nineteenth-century search for a Spanish national style.³ This emphasis on Spanishness played into recent nationalist anti-French and anti-British feeling, following the Napoleonic invasions and War of Independence (1808-14), which led to efforts by the Spanish Bourbon monarchy to distance themselves from their French royal cousins by actively supporting a separate and distinct Spanish identity. Despite its Islamic features, the *mudéjar* was also a style that was rooted in a period of Christian political rule, one that glorified the medieval Christian past of Spain and offered an architectural expression of Spanish identity in the present that was defiantly neither French nor British.

The choice of an architectural style - whether Alhambresque or neo-*mudéjar* - that clearly referenced Spain's own Muslim past for several key national pavilions, at a time when many Spanish critics, writers and historians were ambivalent about this aspect of its past, reveals the important role played by Spain's Islamic architecture in the creation of national identity. In her groundbreaking study of Islamic pavilions, Zeynep Çelik remarked that Spain's choice of an Islamic style for its national pavilions demonstrated "the fundamental conflicts in Spain's self-image."⁴ I would propose, however, that these conflicts are not located in the act of choosing of an *Islamic* style to represent the nation of Spain in

the nineteenth century, a nation that had a long history of engaging with its own Muslim heritage, but rather in the choice between competing versions of the kind of Islamic story that it wanted to tell.⁵ This paper examines these versions in detail through a study of a selection of Spanish pavilions from the 1860s-1870s, moving from the revival of a 'Golden Age' aesthetic rooted in Spain's Catholic imperial past, to the competing Alhambresque and neo-*mudéjar* versions of Spain's Islamic heritage.⁶

Universal Expositions were the vastly expensive and hugely influential spectacles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which attracted unprecedented numbers of visitors from across the social classes.⁷ National pavilions were not featured among the earliest expositions - for example, the Great Exhibition in London of 1851 was intended as a forum in which products and innovations from nations around the world could be displayed within a single large building in Hyde Park, known as the Crystal Palace. But from the time of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867, countries were invited to erect their own national pavilions in the exposition park.⁸ The pavilions were not only used to house the produce of the individual countries - for example wine or armaments or even people - but were also exhibits in themselves, intended to display a nation's character and status on the world stage. They are examples of architectural nationalism in its crudest form, part of the wider trend towards the "reformulation of the cultural world in national terms".⁹ Their designs were chosen by committees that were appointed by each state, and the results were intended to display a singular vision of the nation and its character to itself and to the world.¹⁰

The exposition held in Paris in 1867 was the first to include national pavilions, and the relative size, position and style of each country's pavilion and plot was picked over in minute detail by the national presses. The pavilions were ephemeral structures, assembled with the temporary nature of an exhibition that opened and closed within six months in mind, after which most of the pavilions were dismantled.¹¹ Their interiors were planned to maximise the exhibition space, and their construction materials were chosen with speed of build and decorative impact rather than durability in mind.¹² This lack of concern for durability meant, however, that more than the usual attention could be paid by the architects to the immediate, visual impact of the pavilions, which often resulted in exuberant and experimental facades. Ephemeral architecture allows architects a certain freedom to experiment and to explore possibilities that would not normally be permitted in permanent structures. Temporary structures such as triumphal arches, tents, and pavilions allow for experimental solutions that test out ideas in contexts of celebration and display. While such temporary structures may vanish, their images survive and remain important today for the glimpse they provide into a nation's vision of itself at a particular time, the snapshot they give of where a nation thought it should stand on the world stage, and the insight into how it wanted itself to be seen.¹³ Perhaps because of their ephemeral nature and the festival atmosphere of the expositions, the pavilions drew large audiences and their designs were closely scrutinised and

reproduced in the print media to a degree that was vastly disproportionate to the short lifespan of the buildings.¹⁴

The Spanish delegates were keenly aware of the role played by their national pavilion in the status game that was being enacted on the world stage in Paris in 1867. Reviewing the national pavilion, Spanish critic José Castro y Serrano (1829-1896) praised its position and size in relation to its neighbours, writing

It is not an illusion of national pride, nor an exaggerated example of patriotic interest that induces us to say that the most beautiful of all the edifices built in the *Campo de Marte* is the Spanish pavilion. Located in the most elevated part of the terrain, it is lifted as if on the shoulders of gallantry, and displaying the signs of severe and noble architecture to which it belongs, it would seem that our country, translated into ancient times, presides over a meeting of nations implanted around the representative of Castile. [...] Its dimensions are greater than those of all neighbouring buildings and its height, which towers over them, lends new importance to it[...].¹⁵

The architect of the pavilion was Jerónimo de la Gándara (1825-1877), a professor at the new School of Architecture in Madrid who also sat on the Spanish national exposition committee, charged with organising Spain's contributions to the exposition (Fig.1).¹⁶ Despite his first-hand knowledge of the Islamic architecture of Spain (he produced paintings of the Alhambra for the *Monumentos Arquitectónicos de España* series), Gándara designed a pavilion in the style of the palace of Monterrey in Salamanca, an early sixteenth century, Renaissance-style building that enjoyed great popularity during the nineteenth century for its allusions to a glorified period in Spanish history of Catholic, imperial power with global reach. A centralised structure of two storeys, flanked by two towers, with an arcaded nave and a roof terrace, Gándara's pavilion was praised in the illustrated magazine *El Museo Universal*, which described it as a reproduction of the Monterrey palace, which, the reviewer wrote, was admired for its noble and elegant architecture.¹⁷ In his review of the pavilion, Castro describes how the building transported the Spanish to Zamora, Valladolid or Palencia, to the chivalric times of Castille.¹⁸ The subtext was clear - the revival of this style referenced a period that was glorified as a 'Golden Age' in Spanish history, when a Catholic Spain controlled a vast global empire, a period of relative wealth and stability that was particularly cherished during the unstable political climate of the late nineteenth century.

Despite Castro's effusive description, however, the Spanish pavilion was upstaged in 1867 by the small pavilion inspired by studies of the Alhambra, which was entered not by Spain, but by Prussian delegates to the Paris Exposition (Fig.2). The German architect Carl von Diebitsch (1819-1869), who had spent six months living at the Alhambra from 1846-47, making casts and drawings of its façades, presented his Alhambresque style 'Moorish Kiosk' to great critical acclaim. With its mix of Nasrid-style arches and capitals with pseudo-Nasrid dome and garden setting,¹⁹ the façades painted in a bright palette of red, blue, black and gold, it was a highly romanticised version of the restored pavilion of

the Lion's Court in the Alhambra. Designed to respond to the contemporary fashion for the exotic in Europe, it was directed in particular towards the architect's patrons in Prussia.²⁰

It was not only the Prussians who had begun to adopt the Alhambresque style as their own. Ever since Owen Jones first presented a version of the Court of the Lions pavilion of the Alhambra palace in the context of a Universal Exposition, at the Crystal Palace when it moved to Sydenham in London in 1854,²¹ the fashion for installing an Alhambresque room in palaces had spread across Europe, from the Rafael Contreras Muñoz's 'Gabinete Árabe' at the Palacio Real de Aranjuez in Madrid, which was modelled on the Hall of the Two Sisters at the Alhambra (1847-51), to the Alhambresque bathroom of Empress Fyodorovna at the Winter Palace in St Petersburg (Fig. 3).²² It was the popularity of Jones's Alhambra court, and of the publications, models and copies of the Alhambra that were widely disseminated in Spain, Europe and further afield, that led to the Alhambresque becoming, albeit briefly, a global architectural style.

Alhambresque became the preferred exotic interior style for theatres, smoking rooms and bathhouses in private and public houses across Europe.²³ It became the default architectural mode for synagogues built in the second half of the nineteenth century by Reform Jewish communities across central Europe, from Dresden to Budapest, Berlin to Paris.²⁴ In the Ottoman cities of Cairo and Istanbul, the Alhambresque was used in government buildings and palaces, seemingly an acceptably Europeanised Islamic style that spoke to both local Ottoman and global European audiences.²⁵

The Alhambresque fashion should be understood as part of the larger movement of architectural eclecticism that flourished in the nineteenth century, in which architects selected and combined elements of historical styles with little regard for strict historical accuracy. While it may be possible to link the Alhambresque style as much with the Merinid architecture of Morocco as with the Nasrid buildings of al-Andalus, it was specifically the Alhambra palace that had become increasingly popular among European travellers and that was painted and reproduced by artists and writers, leading to its unprecedented fame and the subsequent direct association of these features with the Alhambra monument.

A version of the Alhambresque had already been employed in an exposition pavilion in Madrid by 1857. The architect Francisco Jareño (1818-92), who had spent time in Germany and Britain during his architectural education in the 1850s, erected an 'Arab pavilion' (*pabellón árabe*) for the National Agricultural Exposition in Madrid in 1857 (Fig.4). The pavilion was built on a rectangular ground plan, with a central entrance, multiple polylobed arches and iron window frames in bright colours, with its 'Arab' ceiling noted by the contemporary journal *El Museo Universal*.²⁶ The choice of an Alhambresque style for the main pavilion may have been stimulated by Jones's recent Alhambra court in London, as the author notes how Spain had been encouraged by recent exhibitions in London (1851), Paris, Belgium and Germany,

to mount this exhibition, which was intended to celebrate Spain's arrival as a world leader in agriculture. The Arab Pavilion was used for the official ceremonial acts at the exposition; it acted as the focal point of national representation with the symbols of all the provinces on its pilasters, and the Spanish flag displayed over the centre of each portico. This was not an international exposition, but nevertheless the fact that Alhambresque was chosen for this official pavilion suggests that the style was already deemed suitable to represent the nation.²⁷

It is no surprise then that Gándara's 1867 pavilion was criticised by the writer and historian Francisco Jose Orellana (1820-1891), who expressed his disappointment that Spain had not erected a pavilion in the more internationally popular Alhambresque style, writing "Orientalism is in fashion in Paris.[...] Why did we not present ourselves to our neighbours under the brilliant vision that so fascinates them? Why not bring to Paris what its artists and fans come to seek in our country?"²⁸ He criticised the 1867 pavilion by Gándara for being too serious and aristocratic to represent anything other than times past. Its style evoked the idea, he wrote, "that Spain does not live in the present, nor has future aspirations, but remains in the past and is fed only by memories."²⁹ To many of the politically liberal critics and artists involved in the expositions, the glorification of Spain's imperial 'Golden Age' through architecture had become associated with political conservatives and with the unpopular reign of Isabel II, who would be deposed the following year (1868). Criticising what they interpreted as the Italian and French origins of the neo-Renaissance styles, they looked instead for architectural styles that they considered to be more authentically Spanish.

It was in the context of the growing nationalist sentiments of the nineteenth century that this question of identifying a Spanish national architectural style could begin to be posed. The Spanish state and its monarchy - politically unstable though it was through much of the nineteenth century - played a key role in framing the answer through the foundation and patronage of institutions, academies and museums, and the sponsorship of publications, which allowed for the creation of a supposedly shared national heritage, an imagined community, and the discourse around it.³⁰ Academies of fine art, history and language were established under royal patronage in the eighteenth century to create and control the cultural output of the nation.³¹ Increasingly, the nineteenth century saw the centralised sponsorship and dissemination of texts and images that sought to define and promote a particular vision of the Spanish nation. The *Comisión Central de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos* was founded in 1844 to identify, catalogue and conserve buildings, monuments and artistic objects for the State, following the recent forced sale of church land and property. A state-sponsored, nationwide project, this centralised recording of monuments allowed scholars and practitioners to study the diversity of architectural styles within Spain for the first time.³² In 1846 the *Boletín Español de Arquitectura* was first published, in which the founding editors argued that a national architectural style could be identified through an examination of these styles of the past.³³ Most significant of all was the publication between 1856-82 of the *Monumentos Arquitectónicos de*

España under the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* and with sponsorship from the Spanish state, an ambitious (though ultimately incomplete) endeavour, the purpose of which was to identify and record important historic buildings from every province of Spain that should collectively form the national architectural corpus, and to publish them in volumes with high quality images alongside text in French and Spanish.³⁴ The publication included Islamic and medieval monuments from Granada, Córdoba and Toledo, thereby including them within the national architectural canon.³⁵ As organs of the State, centred on Madrid and with an emphasis on Castilian culture, these institutions and publications not only described the nation but also helped to bring it into being, by defining its cultural and architectural boundaries and directing the national cultural discourse.³⁶

These new institutions and publications dedicated to the architectural monuments of Spain both enabled and encouraged individual architects to look to the past in search of a national style.³⁷ The mostly politically liberal artists, architects and critics expressed a desire to identify an indigenous national style, as articulated by José Caveda (1796-1882) in his *Memorias para la historia de la Real Academia de San Fernando* (1867), in which he quotes Thomas Hope in looking for "an architecture that, born in our country, developed in our soil, in harmony with our climate, institutes and customs, would be at once elegant, appropriate and original, and would truly merit being called our architecture."³⁸ Which past they chose to reproduce was the subject of intense debates within the scholarly and architectural circles of the time.

The status of Spain's Islamic architecture within the new nationalist canon was a key feature of the discourse. Increasing attention was being paid both in Spain and abroad to its Islamic monuments, starting with the publication of *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (1787 and 1804),³⁹ in which architectural drawings of the Alhambra in Granada and the Mosque in Córdoba were published for the first time.⁴⁰ Meanwhile writers and artists working within the romantic tradition in Germany, France, and Britain viewed Spain largely through the prism of exoticism and difference - thanks in no small part to the writings of Washington Irving, Victor Hugo, François-René de Chateaubriand, and Lord Byron - and reproduced its Islamic architecture through the fanciful exoticisms of the Alhambresque.⁴¹ The question became not only whether the national style should be drawn from the Christian or Muslim historical periods, but which version of an Islamic past the architects should revive.

Less than a decade before the Paris Exposition of 1867, José Amador de los Ríos published his theory of *mudéjar* architecture. He first applied the phrase *el estilo mudéjar* ('*mudéjar* style') in a talk delivered to the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid in 1859,⁴² in which he synthesised an ideological position that incorporated rather than rejected Spain's Muslim past, praising "the transcendental fusion of the genius of Orient and Occident."⁴³ His was not so much an embrace of Spain's Islamic heritage, but rather the identification of a new stylistic category that

was defined by the political and religious status of its actors rather than by architectural aesthetics. Born out of nineteenth-century nationalist sentiments, the *mudéjar* style offered an alternative version of Spain's Islamic architectural heritage by highlighting buildings from a period under Christian rather than Muslim political domination. For Amador de los Ríos, the *mudéjar* style and its supposed collaborative formation between Christians and Muslims in the medieval period, allowed him to highlight a historic period as one of inter-religious tolerance, a tolerance that he argued was inherent in Spanish society.⁴⁴ This was a vision of Spain's past that many hoped would be echoed in the contemporary, nineteenth-century Spanish society of the short-lived First Republic (February 1873 - December 1874).⁴⁵ Commentators, critics, and architects were quick to adopt the idea that a revival of the *mudéjar* style could offer a way forward for Spanish architecture in the contemporary world, despite a lack of clarity about what exactly '*mudéjar* style' or its revival equivalent was.⁴⁶ In its formal elements, the neo-*mudéjar* was broadly characterised by its use of decorative brickwork, ceramic tiling, and square towers, expressed in structures by architects Lorenzo Álvarez Capra (1848-1901) and Emilio Rodríguez Ayuso (1846-91) such as the Escuela Aguirre (1884) in Madrid. At a time when Spain was trying its best to appear more European, the invention of the neo-*mudéjar* offered architect and patron, the possibility of participating in the contemporary fashion for the oriental through an architectural language dominated by Christian actors, rather than highlighting a period of Muslim political domination in Spain.

The architect of the Spanish Pavilion at the 1873 Vienna Exposition came closest to producing a pavilion that responded to Amador de los Ríos's call for *mudéjar* as the national style (Fig.5). José Castro y Serrano, a vociferous critic of the 1867 pavilion, was on the committee that appointed Álvarez Capra as architect in 1873. As the architect of one of the first neo-*mudéjar* style buildings in Madrid, the Plaza de Toros de Goya (1874), Capra employed elements that Amador de los Ríos had described as *mudéjar*, including horse-shoe shaped arches and square turrets.⁴⁷ Capra's pavilion was described as *mudéjar* and recognised as such by *Ilustración Española y Americana* (1873), which noted that "they constructed a pavilion in the *mudéjar* style, according to the traces of the ancient buildings of Toledo."⁴⁸ The pavilion attracted little attention in the global press however, as intense political instability in Spain following the declaration of the First Republic in February 1873, led to the pavilion's late completion and its opening with little publicity.

By the later nineteenth century however, any efforts to identify and use a *mudéjar* style for Spanish Exposition pavilions had been overtaken by a wholehearted embrace of the fashionable Alhambresque, in what Bueno Fidel has termed 'an explosion of Alhambrism'.⁴⁹ In Madrid in particular, palaces and their interiors were built in the Alhambresque style, as well as exposition pavilions. At the Exposition of Mining and Metallurgy held at the Retiro park in Madrid in 1883, a Royal Pavilion in the style of the Court of the Lions pavilion was erected, commissioned by the

mining engineer and organiser of the exposition, Enrique de Nouvion and designed by architect Ricardo Velázquez Bosco (1843-1923) (Fig.6).⁵⁰ Crowned with a tiled dome and painted in golden tones, it formed part of a picturesque royal landscape in which the manipulation of water and its reflections curated viewing points, and open galleries played a vital role.⁵¹ The fact that an Alhambresque-style pavilion was built to represent the Spanish monarchy and by extension Spain, to the invited exhibitors from around the world during the exposition, demonstrates the extent to which the style had come to be seen as part of a Spanish national style. Its references were understood at the time, as it was described in *La Vanguardia* as "the pretty pavilion of the king, in Arab style, whose ceiling, an arrangement of the ceiling of the old palace of the Lion's, has been painted by students of the School of Architecture, under the direction of Señor Velazquez."⁵²

That Velázquez Bosco was also participating in a global Alhambresque fashion is underlined by the fact that it was built to accompany the central pavilion known as the Palacio de Velázquez, which the architect Velázquez Bosco designed in the style of Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace building in London in 1851. This was the same exposition for which Owen Jones had constructed his Alhambra Court at Sydenham in 1854. No doubt Bosco had also seen Diebitsch's 'Moorish kiosk' at the more recent 1867 Paris exposition. The Royal Pavilion in the Retiro Park was later used to host the visit of the Spanish royal family to the colonial Exposition of the Philippines that was staged at the Palacio de Velázquez in the Retiro park in 1887, while at the 1908 *Exposición General de Bellas Artes*, the same Pavilion also formed part of the royal inauguration ceremony.⁵³

At the 1878 Universal Exposition in Paris, José Emilio de Santos, who was head of the Spanish Exposition committee and author of the official memorial publication *España en la Exposition Universal celebrada en Paris 1878*, was concerned with what the global public would expect from a Spanish pavilion - "what would the foreign artists say about us, particularly the Italians, who have their own [artistic] cradle, seeing that we had forgotten our own characteristic style, which is *mudéjar*?"⁵⁴ He argued explicitly for the use of Spanish materials, a Spanish architect and craftsmen, who would work to a Spanish style, a style that he identified as *mudéjar*.

The result was a building by the architect Agustín Ortiz de Villajos (1829-1902) that drew not from the neo-*mudéjar* as articulated by Álvarez Capra, but freely combined a mix of elements from the major Islamic buildings of Spain in an Alhambresque facade (Fig.7). According to critic Santos, the pavilion was inspired by the Cathedral/Mosque of Córdoba, the Cathedral of Tarragona, the Aljaferia of Zaragoza and the *mudéjar* architecture of Toledo - all buildings of major importance in the Spanish canon, and on most of which restorations and scholarly investigations were being carried out during the second half of the nineteenth century. Villajos designed the pavilion facade, which was positioned along the *Rue des Nations* on the *Champ-de-Mars*, in five sections, with Alhambresque details including elongated

arches, slender columns and *sebka* motifs (a grid pattern of lozenge shapes) on the principal facade, the whole building brightly colored in gold, red, and blue. Horseshoe-shaped arches referenced the architecture of Córdoba while the polylobed arches on the central facade referred to the Aljafería in Zaragoza. However, despite Santos's description, the overall effect was Alhambresque - an effect confirmed in the *Ilustración Española y Americana*, in which the description in Spanish quotes from an English illustrated journal that praises the Spanish pavilion for its origins in Arab architecture, and describes the pavilion as "a hidden corner of the Alhambra."⁵⁵ The US Commissioners to the Paris Exposition wrote a report in 1878 in which they described the Spanish pavilion as "a facade in the Moorish style, consisting of a central pavilion with lateral walls ending on either side in smaller pavilions [sic] at Grenada [sic], decorated with details from the principal ancient monuments at Cordoba, Grenada [sic] and Seville."⁵⁶ This was perhaps the ultimate expression of nineteenth-century Spanish eclecticism in architecture, by an architect who moved effortlessly between the neo-Byzantine, neo-Gothic and neo-*mudéjar* during his career, and for whom the Alhambresque offered a suitably festive pavilion style with which to play up to global expectations of what Spanishness and the Spanish style should look like. The building was a success. It received the gold medal from the jury and was described in the guidebook by Fernández de los Ríos as "a delicious composition of hispano-arabic architecture."⁵⁷

The Alhambresque began to fall out of fashion towards the end of the nineteenth century. While the Alhambra remained a focal point for expressions of Spanish national identity, it manifested itself in different ways. At the 1910 Brussels Exposition, the Spanish Pavilion was a fairly close reproduction of the Court of the Lions pavilion, by the curator of the Alhambra, Modesto Cendoya. It coincided with the publication of Luis Seco de Lucena's map of Muslim Granada,⁵⁸ an attempt at a more scientific approach to the architecture of Granada and its place in Spanish history.⁵⁹ This idea of looking to Spain's Islamic architecture as a source for the contemporary national style was explicitly expressed as late as 1951, when architect Fernando Chueca published his *Alhambra Manifesto*, in which he argued that the Alhambra could serve as the inspiration for a new and authentically Spanish architecture.⁶⁰ The neo-*mudéjar* enjoyed moderate success as the style for bullrings, theatres and pavilions in the early twentieth century.⁶¹ The association of *mudéjar* with a Spanish national style also gained currency within European scholarship, and the renowned German scholar of Spanish art, August Liebmann Mayer published *Der spanische Nationalstil des Mittelalters* in 1922, in which he identified *mudéjar* as the Spanish national style, based on its apparent mixing of religious identities in its artistic and architectural expressions.⁶²

This focus on a selection of Spanish national pavilions and the approaches and responses to them, reveals one way in which Spain went about understanding and visualising its Islamic architectural heritage in the nineteenth century. The

possibilities inherent in ephemeral architecture for trying out different versions of nationhood, within the relatively safe spaces of the temporary exhibitions, allowed nineteenth-century architects and patrons to experiment with different versions of Islamic styles, none of which was particularly true to an historical original. Veering between styles, Spain sought to express a modern version of its national identity as different from that of other European nations, through the architectural languages of the *mudéjar* and the Alhambresque. The introduction of neo-*mudéjar* style emphasised a period in which the Christian population had political control of Spain, celebrating its historic religious diversity while allowing a certain distance to be maintained from Spain's contentious Muslim heritage. It was the Alhambresque style, however, based on antiquarian studies of the Alhambra, but nurtured and developed in the palaces, gardens and smoking rooms of the world, that was claimed by Spain for its national pavilions as a national style at the very height of its global popularity.

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Figure captions

Fig. 1. The Spanish pavilion at the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris, designed by Jerónimo de la Gándara. Castro y Serrano, *España en París: Revista de la Exposición Universal*, 1867 (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2011), 8.

Fig. 2. Carl von Diebitsch, "Moorish Kiosk / 'Pabellón Morisco.'" Castro y Serrano, *España en París: Revista de la Exposición Universal*, 1867. (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2011), 157.

Fig. 3. Painting of the Alhambresque-style bathroom of Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna at the Winter Palace, St

Petersburg. Edward Petrovich Hau, *Interiors of the Winter Palace: The Bathroom of Empress Fyodorovna*, 1870. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.

Fig. 4. Exposition Pavilion for the Exposición de Agrícola, Montaña del Príncipe Pío, Madrid, 1857, probably designed by Francisco Jareño. Watercolour 39.9 x 55.2cm, donated to the Museo de don Félix Boix y Merino, 1927, Inv.no. 2170.

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Fig. 5. Spanish pavilion at the 1873 Universal Exposition in Vienna, designed by Lorenzo Álvarez Capra. "Exposición de Viena, Pabellón de España," *La Ilustración Española y Americana* No. XLII, p.677.

Fig. 6. Royal 'Arab Pavilion', Retiro park, Madrid, designed by Ricardo Velázquez Bosco, 1883 ([photograph 1927-36](#)). António Passaporte, Archivo Loty, Inventory number Loty-00393. Fototeca del Patrimonio Histórico. IPCE, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Spain.

Fig. 7. Spanish pavilion at the 1878 Universal Exposition in Paris, designed by Agustín Ortíz de Villajos. *La Academia* 30 July 1878 p.52 (Madrid: Imp. de T. Fortanet, 1878).

¹ Whitney Davis, "The Interval of Revival," Ayla Lepine, Matt Loder and Rosalind McKeever (eds), *Revival, Memories, Identities, Utopias* (London: The Courtauld Institute of Art, 2015), 12-16.

² Terms including Arab, moorish and neo-moorish, Mahometan and Hispano-Moresque were and continue to be used frequently to describe Alhambresque architecture. Arab (*árabe*) was generally used until around 1900 in Spanish contexts. Given the derivation of the nineteenth-century style from studies of the Alhambra palace, rather than from other Islamic monuments in Spain, the term Alhambresque is used here. For terminologies see José Manuel Rodríguez Domingo "Neomudéjar versus neomusulmán: definición y concepto del medievalism islámico en España" in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII. Historia del Arte*, 12 (1999): 265-85; Anna McSweeney, "Versions and Visions of the Alhambra in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman World," *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 22, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2015): 44-69.

³ For *mudéjar* historiography see in particular Jerrilynn D. Dodds, María Rosa Menocal and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008) 309-313 and 323-333; Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, "Le 'style mudéjar' en architecture cent cinquante ans après," *Perspective*, 2, 2009, 277-286. On the politics of *mudéjar* and national identity see Antonio Urquizar Herrera "La caracterización política del concepto mudéjar en España durante el siglo XIX" in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII. Historia del Arte*, 22-23 (2009-10), 201-16.

⁴ Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 210.

⁵ The role of the art and architecture of al-Andalus in the formation of Castilian identity since the fifteenth century is explored in Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza and Maria Judith Feliciano, "Al-Andalus and Castile: Art and Identity in the Iberian Peninsula" Alicia Payne (ed), *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Architecture*. (London: Wiley Blackwell, forthcoming 2017).

⁶ This paper builds on the research of a number of scholars on the Spanish pavilions, including María Jose Bueno Fidel, *Arquitectura y Nacionalismo (Pabellones Españoles en las Exposiciones Universales del Siglo xix)* (Malaga: Universidad de Málaga, 1987); Juan Calatrava "El Arte Hispanomusulmán y las Exposiciones Universales: de Owen Jones a Leopoldo Torres Balbás," *AWRAQ* 11 (2015): 7-31; Luis Ángel Sánchez Gómez "Glorias Efímeras: España en la Exposición Universal de París de 1878" *Historia Contemporánea* 32 (2006): 257-283; Ana Belén Lasheras Peña "España en París: La Imagen Nacional en las Exposiciones Universales, 1855-1900" (PhD Thesis, unpublished: Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2009).

⁷ Also known as World's Fairs, Great Exhibitions, Weltaustellungen, and Exhibitions Universelles. For the purpose of clarity, I will refer to them as Universal Expositions. Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas. The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851 - 1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 1.

⁸ *Exposition universelle d'art et d'industrie*, Paris, April 1 to November 3, 1867.

⁹ José Álvarez Junco, *Spanish Identity in the Age of Nations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 189.

¹⁰ Schwarzer defines architectural nationalism as 'the design of a building according to considerations of how it represents or advances ideas of a nation.' Mitchell Schwarzer, "The Sources of Architectural Nationalism," Raymond Quek, Sarah Butler, and Darren Dean (eds.) *Nationalism and Architecture* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 19.

¹¹ For example: London Great Exhibition May - October 1851; Vienna Exposition May - November 1873; Paris Exposition Universelle 1878 May-November 1878; Barcelona April - December 1888; Chicago May - October 1893; Paris April - November 1900; Brussels April - November 1910.

¹² Wood was frequently used, often in imitation of more durable materials, for example the Spanish pavilion at the

Vienna 1873 exposition was intended to be built of brick, in typical neo-mudéjar style, but a contemporary report describes how for reasons of time and problems in execution, the pavilion was built of wood 'like all the pavilions of other nations,' which was then painted to imitate brick. *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, Año 17 no. 23, Madrid June 16, 1873, 565. By 1876, wood was so prevalent that the Paris exposition administrators had to stipulate that stone masonry structures separated by wide avenues were preferred to prevent fire hazard (dispatch signed 14 September, 1876 by the Ministry of Agriculture re Champ de Mars pavilions). Jean-Baptiste Krantz, *Rapport administratif sur l'Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris*, Tome Premier (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1881), 395.

¹³ The history of temporary structures was explored in the display "Ephemeral Architecture" at the Architecture Gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, curated by Olivia Horsfall Turner (10.12.16 - 16.4.17).

¹⁴ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 41-50. Greenhalgh notes that the 1851 Great Exhibition in London drew 6,039,195 visitors (p.30). Low entrance fees meant that the large crowds were not only drawn from the wealthier sections of society - Castro y Serrano reports that the 1867 Paris Exposition entrance fee was 1 peseta, writing that 'never before has so little been asked for such a great show. Who even thinks of this amount?' ("Jamás se ha pedido menos por mayor espectáculo. ¿Quién piensa siquiera en la cantidad? "). José Castro y Serrano, *España en Paris. Revista de la Exposición Universal de 1867* (Madrid: Librería de Duran, 1867), 145.

¹⁵ Castro y Serrano, *España en Paris*, 7. Translation by McSweeney.

¹⁶ Gándara had designed several theatres and Spain. During the 1860s he worked alongside Francisco and Rafael Contreras among others on the prints of 'Mahometan' architecture, including those of the Alhambra, for the *Monumentos Arquitectónicos de España. Publicados a expensas del Estado y bajo la dirección de una comisión especial creada por el Ministerio de Fomento* (Madrid: Imprenta y Calcografía Nacional, 1856-1882). See Javier Ortega Vidal, "Los dibujos de la 'arquitectural mahometana' en Monumentos Arquitectónicos," Antonio Almagro Gorbea (ed.), *El legado de al-Ándalus. Las antigüedades árabes en los dibujos de la Academia* (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Fundación Mapfre, 2015): 44-61. For a list of the committee members see *Exposition Universelle de 1867. Catalogue général de la section espagnole, publié par la Commission Royale d'Espagne* (Paris: Imprimerie générale de Ch. Lahure, 1867), 5.

¹⁷ *El Museo Universal*, May 1867, no. 18:11, 138-9.

¹⁸ Castro y Serrano, *España en Paris*, 7

¹⁹ The term 'pseudo-Nasrid' is used because these elements were inspired by nineteenth-century restorations to the Alhambra palace, such as the addition of a Persian-style dome to the Court of the Lions pavilion by Rafael Contreras.

²⁰ See Elke Pflugradt-Abdel Aziz, "A Proposal by the architect Carl von Diebitsch (1819-1869): Mudéjar Architecture for a Global Civilization," N.O.Oulebsir and Mercedes Volait, M. (eds). *L'Orientalisme architectural entre imaginaires et savoirs* (Paris, Picard: Collection d'une rive l'autre, 2009), 69-88.

²¹ Kathryn Ferry, "Owen Jones and the Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace", Glaire Anderson and Mariam Rosser-Owen (eds.), *Revisiting Al-Andalus: Perspectives on the Material Culture of Islamic Iberia and Beyond* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007), 227-246.

²² See Ariane Varela in this volume.

²³ Mariam Rosser-Owen, *Islamic Arts of Spain* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), chapter 4.

²⁴ Olga Bush, "The Architecture of Jewish Identity: the New-Islamic Central Synagogue of New York," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63 no 2, (June 2004): 180-201.

²⁵ McSweeney, "Versions and Visions," 44-69.

²⁶ The pavilion is described as a 'pabellón árabe' and a 'templete árabe' in C. Navarro y Rodrigo, "Exposición de Agricultura" in *El Museo Universal* 19 (15.10.1857): 148.

²⁷ Navascués attributes the pavilion to Jareño, though he notes that its authorship is not certain. See Pedro Navascués Palacio, *Arquitectura y arquitectos madrileños del siglo xix*, (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Madrileños, 1973), 168. See also María Álvarez Rodríguez, *El pensamiento arquitectónico en España en el siglo XIX a través de las revistas artísticas del reinado isabelino* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2015), 380-1.

²⁸ Francisco J. Orellana, *La Exposición Universal de París en 1867* (Barcelona, 1867), 14: "el orientalismo está de moda en París [...] ¿por qué no habernos presentado á nuestros vecinos bajo el aspecto de la ilusión prismática que tanto les embelesa? [...] ¿Por qué no llevarles á París lo que sus artistas y aficionados vienen á buscar á nuestra patria?"

²⁹ Orellana *La Exposición*, 45: "Como significacion, es un anacronismo; y hasta el color de piedra tostada y ennegrecida por los siglos, que ha debido dársele, contribuye á entristecer el ánimo, trasladándole á tiempos que ya no son, é inspirando la idea de que España no vive en el presente, ni tiene aspiraciones futuras, sino que reposa en el pasado y solo se alimenta de recuerdos."

³⁰ The nation as a socially constructed community imagined by its members is explored in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). See also Álvarez Junco, *Spanish Identity in the Age of Nations*, 126: "Rightly or wrongly, as the years went by it was felt that there was a growing need to reinforce patriotic sentiments and ideas: to clarify what it meant to be Spanish, to describe Spain from a geographical point of view, to list its monuments, to learn about its history, and, if possible, to see it and touch it in illustrations and public statues."

³¹ Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (founded in 1752); Real Academia de la Historia (1738); Real Academia Española (1713).

³² The index is available online. See the introduction by Esperanza Navarrete Martínez in:

http://www.realacademiabellasartessanfernando.com/assets/docs/comisiones/comisiones_provinciales.pdf. The first secretary of the Commission was José Amador de los Ríos.

³³ Its first directors were the then secretary of the central monuments commission, José Amador de los Ríos and architecture professor Antonio de Zabaleta.

³⁴ *Monumentos Arquitectónicos de España. Publicados a expensas del Estado y bajo la dirección de una comisión especial creada por el Ministerio de Fomento* (Madrid: Imprenta y Calcografía Nacional, 1856-1882).

³⁵ The architects and archaeologists who produced the *Monumentos* publication included Jerónimo de la Gándara (architect of the 1867 Spanish pavilion), Amador de los Ríos and Manuel de Assas (who were central to the promotion of *mudéjar* as the Spanish national style).

³⁶ "Throughout Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, books were written about national history, museums were built to enshrine national culture, civic monuments and altars were consecrated to the nation, and rituals and ceremonies were invented in celebration of the nation." Álvarez Junco, *Spanish Identity*, 125.

³⁷ Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "Nationalism and Archaeology. Spanish Archaeology in the Europe of Nationalities", Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett (eds) *Nationalism, Politics and the Practice of Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 42. On the publication of books about Spanish national history see Álvarez Junco *Spanish Identity*, 129-56.

³⁸ Caveda quotes from Thomas Hope, *An Historical Essay on Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1835). Caveda's ideas about architectural nationalism are also evident in his history of Spanish architecture, which includes at least fifty pages on Arab architecture in Spain: José Caveda, *Ensayo histórico sobre los diversos géneros de arquitectura empleados en España desde la dominación romana hasta nuestros días* (Madrid: Imprenta de D. Santiago Saunague, 1848). Translation by McSweeney.

³⁹ Jose de Hermosilla y Sandoval, Juan de Villanueva and Juan Pedro Arnal, *Antigüedades Árabes de España* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia de San Fernando, 1787 and 1804). See also Almagro *El legado de al-Andalus* (2015).

⁴⁰ Meanwhile, in France Alexandre Laborde (1773-1842) wrote his *Voyage pittoresque et historique de l'Espagne* between 1812-20, while in Great Britain, James Cavanagh Murphy (1760-1814) published *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* in 1816.

⁴¹ Álvarez-Junco, *Spanish Identity*, 180.

⁴² José Amador de los Ríos delivered his talk entitled 'El estilo mudéjar en arquitectura' on the June 19, 1859 at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. It was first published as *Discursos leídos ante la Real Academia de Nobles Artes de San Fernando, en la recepción pública de Don José Amador de los Ríos* (Madrid: Imprenta de José Rodríguez, 1859). A second revised edition was published in 1872 in the volume *Discursos leídos en las recepciones y actos públicos celebrados por la Real Academia de las Tres Nobles Artes de San Fernando desde 19 de junio de 1859*. Tomo I (Madrid: Imprenta de Manuel Tello, 1872).

⁴³ Amador de los Ríos, *Discursos* (1859) 14. Translation by McSweeney

⁴⁴ As María Judith Feliciano has recently written, "the concept of *mudéjar* art is a fundamentally nineteenth and early twentieth-century construct conceived in European and American circles. [...] Its inception and diffusion coincided with crucial processes of nation-building, where the attainment of cultural legitimacy through the manipulation of visual symbols and the relationship between nascent modern nation states and their interpretation of the historical past were essential to the formulation of new national narratives." María Judith Feliciano, "The Invention of Mudéjar Art and the Viceregal Aesthetic Paradox: Notes on the Reception of Iberian Ornament in New Spain," Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (eds), *Histories of Ornament from Global to Local* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016): 70.

⁴⁵ Amador de los Ríos, "Estudios monumentales y arqueológicos. Portugal. V. Monumentos de transición, apellidados manuelinos," *Revista de España* 35 (1873): 212.

⁴⁶ In his response to Amador de los Ríos's published lecture, Don Pedro de Madrazo (member of the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* since 1842 and its director from 1894; painter writer art critic) (1816-98), wrote how *mudéjar* could offer a way forward for Spanish civil architecture: "This school [*mudéjar* architecture], enlivened by the spirit of the West [...] could serve as a model to civil architecture in Spain for this century" "Esta escuela, vivificada por el espíritu de Occidente, [...] pudieran servir de modelo á la arquitectura civil española de nuestro mismo siglo.." Madrazo in Amador de los Ríos, *Discursos* (1859), 69. However, the same critic would go on to question the validity of *mudéjar* style as a category almost thirty years later. Pedro de Madrazo "De los Estilos en las Artes," *La Ilustración Española y Americana* (1888): 262-3 (262). "Decir, pues, *estilo mudéjar*, es no decir nada determinado y definida, y más vale abandonar la peligrosa novedad de este vocabulo, y ceñirse al uso antiguo de señalar cada estilo con su verdadero nombre, que abarcar en un calificativo demasiado lato y genérico tantos estilos diferentes."

⁴⁷ Plaza de Toros de Goya in Madrid by Lorenzo Álvarez Capra and Emilio Rodríguez Ayuso, no longer extant.

⁴⁸ "Situación de los objetos de la Sección Española en la Exposición Universal de Viena," *La Ilustración Española y Americana* XXXVI (1873): 588-590. Translation by McSweeney.

⁴⁹ Bueno Fidel, *Arquitectura y Nacionalismo*, 44.

⁵⁰ *Exposición Nacional de Minería, Artes Metalúrgicas, Cerámica, Cristalería y Aguas Minerales*, Madrid, 1883.

⁵¹ The dome and tiled roof may have been inspired by the 1850s restoration of the pavilion at the Court of the Lions and the installation of the erroneous dome with its colorful tiled roof under the direction of Rafael Contreras. See Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "El Patio de los Leones," *Arquitectura*, XI no.117 (January 1929): 221-234. The Contreras models of the Alhambra pavilion were widely available and may have inspired many of the subsequent versions. See the paper by

Asún Rodríguez in this volume.

⁵² *La Vanguardia* 241 (26 May 1883): 4. Translation by McSweeney.

⁵³ The pavilion fell into disrepair and was dismantled in the 1950s. Luis Ángel Sánchez Gómez, *Un imperio en la vitrina. El colonialismo español en la Pacífico y la Exposición de Filipinas de 1887* (Madrid: CSIC, 2003), 76. See also the blog entry by Jesús Esetena at http://pasionpormadrid.blogspot.co.uk/2015_01_01_archive.html. Accessed online 21.8.16.

⁵⁴ José Emilio de Santos, *España en la Exposición Universal celebrada en París en 1878. Tomo II. Memoria* (Madrid: Imp. de M. Tello), 134. Translation by McSweeney

⁵⁵ *I.E.A* 23, Madrid 22 June 1878, 406.

⁵⁶ William W. Story, *Reports of the United States commissioners to the Paris universal exposition, 1878. Published under direction of the secretary of state by authority of Congress Vol.2* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880) 154.

⁵⁷ Angel Fernández de los Ríos, *La Exposición Universal de 1878. Guía itinerario* (Madrid: English y Grass Editores, 1878), 100.

⁵⁸ Luis Seco de Lucena, *Plano de Granada Árabe* (1910). See Juan Calatrava and Mario Ruiz Morales, *Los planos de Granada 1500 – 1909. Cartografía urbana e imagen de la ciudad*. Los Libros de la Estrella 26. Historia, economía y sociedad (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 2005).

⁵⁹ José Manuel Rodríguez Domingo, "La Alhambra efímera: el pabellón de España en la Exposición Universal de Bruselas (1910)," *Cuadernos de Arte de la Universidad de Granada* 28 (1997): 125-39.

⁶⁰ Fernando Chueca Goitia *et al*, *Manifiesto de la Alhambra* (Madrid: Dirección General de Arquitectura, 1953).

⁶¹ At the Ibero-American Exposition held in Seville in 1929, the neo-mudéjar style was reserved not for the main pavilion, but for the palace of decorative arts.

⁶² August L. Mayer, *Der Spanische Nationalstil des Mittelalters (der Mudéjarstil)* (Leipzig: E.A.Seemann, 1922).